



GREEN SPRING GARDENS PARK

PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

4603 GREEN SPRING ROAD ☎ ALEXANDRIA ☎ VIRGINIA 22312

PHONE: (703) 642-5173 ☎ FAX: (703) 642-8095

WWW.GREENSPRING.ORG

RECOMMENDED SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED DECIDUOUS SHRUBS FOR THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Deciduous shrubs are some of the most useful and exciting plants in the landscape. Because their leaves die and fall off in the autumn, they have changing interest throughout the year - they are valued for their colorful flowers, fruits, foliage, and twigs, and for their varied shapes and textures. Deciduous shrubs can be used in many ways in the landscape: they can be used as specimen plants; grouped or massed together; or combined with annuals, perennials, bulbs, trees, evergreen shrubs, vines, and groundcovers. Native species may also be used in naturalistic designs. Embellish your landscape with these beautiful yet functional plants!

The following are useful definitions:

- **Border** - a bed that is longer than wide and planted with trees, shrubs, flowers, and/or other types of plants. May be backed by walls, fences, or hedges and is chiefly viewed from one side. Free-standing island beds are a variation on the border.
- **Cultivar (cv.)** - a cultivated variety designated by single quotes (e.g., 'Waterfall'). A **variety (var.)** or **subspecies (subsp.)**, in contrast, is found in nature and is a subdivision of a species.
- **Full Shade** - the amount of light under a dense deciduous tree canopy or beneath evergreens.
- **Naturalistic Use** - native plants that, when properly sited, perform well with minimal care; best used in an informal design that suggests a natural landscape.
- **Part Shade** - the amount of light in an area shaded part of the day, among deciduous trees with high branches, among deciduous trees with foliage that is not heavy, or among thinned deciduous woods.
- **Specimen** - an ornamental plant situated alone in a prominent, uncrowded space.

The following is a list of medium-sized and small deciduous shrubs that perform well in the Washington, D.C. area. Recommended cultivars are noted in parentheses. Most of these shrubs prefer a moist, well-drained site. Light requirements and other cultural requirements or tolerances are noted in the comments column. Species that are native to Virginia are marked with an asterisk (*).

[Gold Medal Plant Awards are given annually by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to underused woody plants that perform especially well in gardens from New York City to Washington, D.C.]

MEDIUM-SIZED DECIDUOUS SHRUBS (5-12 FEET TALL)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Acer palmatum</i> Dissectum group (‘Waterfall’ - best green-leaved cv. [Gold Medal Award]; red-leaved cvs. - ‘Tamukeyama’ [Gold Medal Award] & others)	Cutleaf Japanese Maple	Specimen or border; full sun to part shade in consistently moist sites (sensitive to drought & verticillium wilt)
<i>Aesculus parviflora</i> [Gold Medal Award]; native to SC, etc.	Bottlebrush Buckeye	Specimen or massing (suckers); light shade to part shade
<i>Aronia arbutifolia</i> * (now <i>Photinia pyrifolia</i>) (‘Brilliantissima’; <i>A. (Photinia) melanocarpa</i> * is similar but shorter – generally a small shrub [Gold Medal Award])	Red Chokeberry Black Chokeberry	Border, groups, or naturalistic use; both sucker but black chokeberry suckers more; full sun to light shade; tolerate wet sites
<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i> *	Groundsel-bush	Border or naturalistic use; full sun; tolerates wet soils & salt; reseeds readily
<i>Buddleia (Buddleja) × weyeriana</i> ‘Honeycomb’ (yellow – flowered hybrids seldom reseed compared to pink, purple, blue, white, or red fl. <i>B. davidii</i> cvs. & hybrids – less likely to become invasive)	Honeycomb Butterfly Bush	Border; full sun; ‘Lochinch’ is one lavender flowered cv. that reseeded readily at Green Spring (should not be grown in our region due to exotic invasive potential)
<i>Calycanthus floridus</i> * (‘Athens’)	Eastern Sweetshrub, Carolina Allspice	Border, groups, or naturalistic use; full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites
<i>C. (Sinocalycanthus) chinensis</i>	Chinese Sweetshrub	Border; light shade to part shade; tolerates dry sites
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i> *	Buttonbush	Naturalistic use or groups; likes moist or wet soils; full sun best
<i>Chaenomeles × superba</i> & <i>C. speciosa</i> cvs. (‘Cameo’, ‘Falconnet Charlet’ - ‘Falconette’ is what some local nurseries sell it as)	Flowering Quince	Border or groups; full sun to light shade; tolerates dry sites
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i> * (‘Hummingbird’ [Gold Medal Award] - a small cv.; ‘Rosea’; ‘Ruby Spice’ [Gold Medal Award]; ‘Creel’s Calico’ is a small variegated cv.); <i>C. acuminata</i> * (Cinnamon Clethra) is a larger plant – best for naturalizing (not for wet sites – for consistently moist sites) in shady areas	Summersweet	Groups, border, or naturalistic use; <i>C. alnifolia</i> slowly suckers; full sun to part shade; tolerates wet soils

<p><i>Cornus alba</i> 'Sibirica' <i>C. sanguinea</i> 'Winter Beauty' ('Winter Flame') & 'Midwinter Fire' are similar <i>C. sericea</i>* ('Flaviramea', 'Hedgerow Gold', 'Silver & Gold' [Gold Medal Award]) Note: <i>C. amomum</i>* (Silky Dogwood) is a tough native for naturalistic use in moist to wet sites</p>	<p>Tatarian Dogwood European Dogwood Cultivars</p> <p>Redosier Dogwood</p>	<p>Border or groups; full sun to light shade; naturalistic use for species type of <i>C. sericea</i>; renewal prune for best winter stem color; tolerate wet soils</p>
<p><i>Corylopsis pauciflora</i> (<i>C. glabrescens</i>, <i>C. sinensis</i> var. <i>calvescens</i>, <i>C. spicata</i>, & 'Winterthur' are good choices if larger plants desired)</p>	<p>Buttercup Winterhazel</p>	<p>Specimen, border, or groups; full sun to part shade; tolerates dry soils</p>
<p><i>Cotinus coggygria</i> 'Royal Purple' & 'Velvet Cloak'</p>	<p>Purple-leaved Smokebush</p>	<p>Groups, or border; full sun; tolerates dry sites; often grown as a cutback shrub for foliage effect</p>
<p><i>Cyrilla racemiflora</i>* Note: similar <i>Cliftonia monophylla</i> (Buckwheat Tree or Black Titi) is native to SC, etc. - may be borderline hardy in some of the Washington, D.C. area</p>	<p>Swamp Cyrilla, Swamp Titi</p>	<p>Border or naturalistic use; full sun to part shade; tolerates wet soil</p>
<p><i>Fothergilla major</i> ('Mt. Airy') Note: native to NC, etc; Dwarf Fothergilla (<i>F. gardenii</i>; native to NC, etc.) is a smaller plant that needs more moisture & more shade to thrive</p>	<p>Large Fothergilla, Mountain Witchalder</p>	<p>Groups or border; full sun (moist site) to part shade</p>
<p><i>Hibiscus syriacus</i> cvs. Bred by Dr. Egolf at the U.S. National Arboretum (sterile; 'Diana' [Gold Medal Award], 'Helene', 'Minerva')</p>	<p>Sterile Rose of Sharon Cultivars</p>	<p>Border, specimen, or groups; full sun to light shade; salt tolerant; tolerates dry sites</p>
<p><i>Hydrangea paniculata</i> ('Grandiflora', 'Kyushu', 'Tardiva', 'Unique'; can grow to be large shrubs) <i>H. quercifolia</i> (native to TN, SC, etc.; 'Alice' is the tallest cv.; 'Snowflake' is a double-flowered form; 'Snow Queen' [Gold Medal Award]; small cv.: 'Sike's Dwarf')</p>	<p>Panicle Hydrangea</p> <p>Oakleaf Hydrangea</p>	<p>Groups, border, or specimen; full sun to part shade</p> <p>Specimen, border, or groups; light shade to full shade</p>

<p><i>Ilex verticillata</i>* & cvs. ‘Winter Red’ [Gold Medal Award] & ‘Winter Gold’: male pollinator is ‘Southern Gentleman’ (this may be an unnamed male Green Spring has – pollinator for southern type, fast-growing cvs.); ‘Red Sprite’ (‘Nana’) is a small cv. – male pollinator is ‘Jim Dandy’; ‘Maryland Beauty’ also is performing well at Green Spring <i>Note: I. verticillata</i> hybrid ‘Sparkleberry’ [Gold Medal Award] can eventually grow to be a large shrub (‘Southern Gentleman’ is a male pollinator)</p>	Winterberry Holly	Specimen, groups, or border; naturalistic use also for <i>I. verticillata</i> ; full sun to part shade; tolerates wet or dry sites (fruits better with moisture)
<i>Kerria japonica</i> ‘Golden Guinea’	Golden Guinea Japanese Kerria	Border or groups; full sun (moist site) to part shade
<i>Lespedeza thunbergii</i> (‘Alba’, ‘Gibraltar’, ‘Pink Fountain’)	Thunberg Lespedeza	Border or groups; full sun; a subshrub - partially woody perennial plant; tolerates dry sites
<i>Lindera benzoin</i> * <i>L. obtusiloba</i>	Spicebush Japanese Spicebush	Border or groups; naturalistic use also for <i>L. benzoin</i> ; light shade to part shade in moist sites
<i>Myrica</i> (now <i>Morella</i>) <i>pensylvanica</i> *	Northern Bayberry	Border, groups, or naturalistic use; full sun; salt tolerant; tolerates dry sites
<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i> * cvs.: ‘Dart’s Gold’ & ‘Nugget’ (golden leaves); Diabolo® (‘Monlo’) [Gold Medal Award; also spelled Diablo in some references; purple leaves]	Ninebark Cultivars	Border or groups; full sun to light shade; species type is best for naturalistic use; tolerates dry sites
<p><i>Rhododendron arborescens</i>*</p> <p><i>R. austrinum</i> (native to GA, FL, etc.)</p> <p><i>R. calendulaceum</i>*</p> <p><i>R. canescens</i> (native to NC, etc. & naturalized in VA)</p> <p><i>R. periclymenoides</i>*</p> <p><i>R. prinophyllum</i>*</p>	<p>Sweet Azalea</p> <p>Orange Azalea</p> <p>Flame Azalea</p> <p>Piedmont Azalea</p> <p>Pinxterbloom Azalea</p> <p>Roseshell Azalea</p>	<p>Border, groups, or naturalistic use; light shade to part shade; <i>R. arborescens</i>, <i>canescens</i>, & <i>viscosum</i> are tolerant of wet soils but not wet clay; <i>R. atlanticum</i>, <i>austrinum</i>, & <i>periclymenoides</i> most tolerant of dry sites</p>

<p><i>Rhododendron viscosum</i>* Note: Coast Azalea (<i>R. atlanticum</i>*) is a small plant; some hybrids of this species with <i>R. periclymenoides</i>* (e.g., 'Rosy Cheeks' ['Choptank Rose'] & 'Marydel') have performed well. Tall deciduous hybrids that tolerate more sun than most azaleas include 'Aromi Sunrise' & 'Sunstruck'. <i>R. mucronulatum</i> ('Cornell Pink') is a deciduous rhododendron – use in borders or groups in moist sites.</p>	<p>Swamp Azalea</p>	<p>Border, groups, or naturalistic use; light shade to part shade; <i>R. viscosum</i> is tolerant of wet soils but not wet clay; <i>R. atlanticum</i> & hybrids fairly tolerant of dry sites</p>
<p><i>Rhus typhina</i> (now <i>R. hirta</i>)* 'Laciniata' Note: the species type of the above & <i>R. copallinum</i>* (Shining Sumac) are good species for naturalistic use.</p>	<p>Cutleaf Staghorn Sumac</p>	<p>Groups, border, screening, or massing (suckers); full sun; can become a large shrub; tolerates dry sites</p>
<p><i>Sambucus canadensis</i>* (now <i>S. nigra</i> subsp. <i>canadensis</i>; 'Variegata') <i>S. nigra</i> subsp. <i>nigra</i> 'Laciniata'</p>	<p>American Elderberry Cutleaf European Elderberry</p>	<p>Border for 'Laciniata' & 'Variegata'; naturalistic use for <i>S. canadensis</i>; full sun to part shade; tolerate wet soils</p>
<p><i>Stachyurus praecox</i> ('Issai')</p>	<p>Early Spiketail</p>	<p>Border or groups; light shade to part shade</p>
<p><i>Syringa meyeri</i> 'Palibin' [Gold Medal Award] – can be a small shrub in some sites <i>S. patula</i> 'Miss Kim'</p>	<p>Palibin Lilac Miss Kim Lilac</p>	<p>Border or groups; full sun to light shade; tolerate dry sites</p>
<p><i>Viburnum carlesii</i> ('Compactum'; <i>V. × juddii</i> is similar to <i>V. carlesii</i>) <i>V. dentatum</i>* Note: Blue Muffin™ ('Christom') is smaller than the species type <i>V. macrocephalum</i> (forma <i>keteleeri</i> is the wild form) <i>V. nudum</i> var. <i>nudum</i>* ('Winterthur' [Gold Medal Award]) <i>V. plicatum</i> forma <i>tomentosum</i> ('Shasta' [Gold Medal Award], 'Kern's Pink' ['Roseace'])</p>	<p>Korean Spice Viburnum Arrowwood Viburnum Chinese Snowball Possumhaw Viburnum Doublefile Viburnum</p>	<p>Border or groups; full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites Border, groups, screen, or naturalistic use; full sun to part shade Border, groups, or screen; full sun to part shade Border, groups, or naturalistic use; full sun to part shade; tolerants wet sites Groups, border, or screen; light shade to part shade in moist sites</p>

Other native species for naturalistic use: <i>Viburnum nudum</i> var. <i>cassinoides</i> * (Witherod Viburnum). A small native viburnum: <i>V. acerifolium</i> * (Mapleleaf Viburnum) – naturalistic use or groups; light shade to full shade; tolerates dry sites. Note: Viburnums are generally self-incompatible & need two plants of the same species with different genetic backgrounds to produce fruit.		
<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i> Note: <i>V. rotundifolia</i> is a low-growing shrub that can function like a groundcover	Chaste Tree	Border or specimen; full sun; salt tolerant; both species tolerate dry sites
<i>Weigela florida</i> ‘Variegata’ [‘Wine & Roses’ [®] (‘Alexandra’) - Gold Medal Award]; these 2 cvs. can be small shrubs in certain sites, ‘Silver Edge’ - nice medium-sized cv.	Weigela Cultivars	Border; full sun to light shade

Medium-sized native shrubs primarily for naturalistic use or special habitat uses:

*Alnus serrulata** (Smooth Alder; wetland areas), *Corylus americana** & *C. cornuta** (Hazelnut), & *Euonymus americana** (American Euonymus or Hearts-a-bursting; *E. atropurpurea** [Eastern Wahoo] is a large shrub)

SMALL DECIDUOUS SHRUBS (2-5 FEET TALL)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Callicarpa americana</i> * (<i>C. dichotoma</i> & <i>C. japonica</i> have been reseeding readily at Green Spring – they may become exotic invasive plants, especially in moist sites)	American Beautyberry	Border, groups, or naturalistic use; full sun to light shade; tolerate dry sites
<i>Caryopteris</i> × <i>clandonensis</i> & cvs.	Bluebeard	Border or groups; full sun; a subshrub - partially woody perennial plant; tolerates dry sites
<i>Forsythia</i> × <i>intermedia</i> ‘Fiesta’ (Gold Tide™ (‘Courtasol’) is a promising groundcover)	Fiesta Forsythia	Border; full sun to light shade; tolerates dry sites

<p><i>Hydrangea arborescens</i>* ('Annabelle' [Gold Medal Award])</p> <p><i>H. macrophylla</i> ('Blue Wave', 'Coerulea', 'Nigra') & the similar <i>H. serrata</i> ('Bluebird', 'Preziosa')</p> <p>Note: <i>H. macrophylla</i> 'Pia' is a lovely dwarf (2-3 ft. tall)</p>	<p>Smooth Hydrangea</p> <p>Bigleaf Hydrangea</p> <p>Hydrangea</p>	<p>Border, groups, or naturalistic use</p> <p>Border or groups; light shade to part shade in consistently moist sites</p>
<p><i>Itea virginica</i>* ('Henry's Garnet' [Gold Medal Award], 'Longspire', 'Saturnalia', Little Henry™ ['Sprich'])</p>	<p>Virginia Sweetspire</p>	<p>Border, groups, massing (suckers), or naturalistic use; full sun to part shade; tolerant of wet or dry sites</p>
<p><i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i></p>	<p>Winter Jasmine</p>	<p>Groups, hanging over walls, espalier, or groundcover; full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites</p>
<p><i>Lagerstroemia</i> 'Velma's Royal Delight' (may be medium-sized in certain sites); 'Chickasaw' & 'Pocomoke' are shorter – the groundcover height range</p>	<p>Dwarf Crape Myrtle Cultivars</p>	<p>Border or groups; full sun</p>
<p><i>Leucothoe racemosa</i>*</p>	<p>Sweetbells Leucothoe</p>	<p>Groups or naturalistic use; tolerates wet sites</p>
<p><i>Rhus aromatica</i>* 'Gro-Low' (a female; the medium-sized species is good for naturalistic use; female plants need male pollinator to set fruit)</p>	<p>Gro-Low Sumac</p>	<p>Border, groups, massing, or naturalistic use; full sun to light shade; tolerates dry sites</p>
<p><u>Rosa – disease resistant cvs.</u></p> <p>Small shrubs: 'Ballerina', Carefree Delight® ('Meipotal'), Cherry Meidiland® ('Meirumour'), 'Katharina Zeimet', Knockout™ ('Radrazz'), 'Marie Pavie', Molineux® ('Ausmol'), 'Old Blush', 'Sea Foam', & 'The Fairy'</p> <p>Medium-sized shrubs: Bonica ('Meidomonac') & Carefree Beauty ('Beubi')</p>	<p>Disease Resistant Rose Cultivars</p>	<p>Border or groups; full sun (often do well with morning sun & afternoon shade)</p>

<p><u>Disease-resistant rose species</u> Small shrubs: <i>Rosa virginiana</i>* (suckers) & <i>moschata</i> var. <i>nastarana</i> Medium-sized shrubs: <i>R. carolina</i>* & <i>moyesii</i> ('Geranium'); <i>R. palustris</i>* is for naturalistic use in moist to wet areas – suckers readily.</p>	<p>Disease Resistant Rose Species</p>	<p>Border or groups; native roses can be used in naturalistic plantings; full sun (often do well with morning sun & afternoon shade)</p>
<p><i>Salix purpurea</i> 'Nana'</p>	<p>Dwarf Purpleosier Willow</p>	<p>Border, groups, or hedge; full sun; tolerates wet soils</p>
<p><i>Spiraea japonica</i> (× <i>bumalda</i>) cvs: 'Goldflame', 'Goldmound', 'Limemound', 'Magic Carpet', & 'Shirobana'; another golden-leaved shrub with narrower leaves is <i>S. thunbergii</i> Mellow Yellow® ('Ogon')[Gold Medal Award]) Note: <i>S. prunifolia</i> (Bridalwreath Spirea) is a medium-sized shrub for borders. <i>S. trilobata</i> (Threelobe Spirea) is a small shrub for borders that can grow in some shade as well as full sun. A small native shrub primarily for naturalistic use: <i>Spiraea alba</i> var. <i>latifolia</i>* (White Meadowsweet).</p>	<p>Japanese Spirea (Spiraea) Cultivars</p>	<p>Border or groups; full sun; tolerates dry sites; this species is on the Virginia exotic invasive list but we have seen no signs of invasiveness in the Washington, DC area</p>
<p><i>Zenobia pulverulenta</i>* (blue form is the prettiest)</p>	<p>Dusty Zenobia</p>	<p>Naturalistic use or groups; full sun in moist to wet sites</p>

Small native shrubs primarily for naturalistic use, special habitat uses, or fruit production:

*Ceanothus americanus** (New Jersey Tea), *Diervilla lonicera** (Bush Honeysuckle), *Rubus odoratus** (Flowering Raspberry), & *Vaccinium stamineum** (Deerberry) & *V. corymbosum** (Smooth Highbush Blueberry; fruit of many plants also delicious to humans – the blueberry we most commonly eat)

© 2003

Developed by Brenda Skarphol, Curatorial Horticulturist

Updated 1/2003 (Decshrub)